Cradle of Confederation

PROVINCE HOUSE

Parks Canada Parcs Canada

Province House
Cradle of Confederation

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Cover: Oil painting of the Charlottetown Conference ball, Province House, by Dusan Kadlec (Parks Canada/Themadel Foundation)

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Canada East/Canada West
Maritime provinces (Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island)
Newfoundland
Northwest Territories
Red River Settlement
USA
Russia
Vancouver Island
British Columbia
Victoria
Charlottetown
Halifax
Boston
New York

PART I
Confederation

North America in 1864

With the creation of the United States of America, Britain lost most of her North American colonies. By the 1860's, the remaining colonies were under increasing pressure to define their common interests in relation both to Britain and their giant neighbour to the south. A meeting in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, in 1864, set in motion a process that resulted, three years later, in the birth of the Canadian nation.

THE NEW COUNTRY

The Birth of a Nation. A brief account of Confederation.

Canada dates its birth from July 1, 1867 and its conception from September of 1864. The occasion was a conference to discuss the desirability of union of Britain's North American colonies. The place was Province House, in Charlottetown.

The original purpose of the Charlottetown Conference was to discuss the union of the three Maritime provinces — Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. But others to the west had a different plan.

There was already a Canada, United Canada, which was the uneasy union of what are now Ontario and Quebec, then known as Canada West and Canada East. Politicians there had come to deadlock, and were searching for arrangements that might make government effective.

The vision of a great country was beginning to take shape from their deliberations. They saw the Charlottetown Conference as an opportunity to introduce the idea of forging this nation, so they asked if they could attend and present proposals. Permission granted, they came with their case thoroughly prepared, and it was this larger union that dominated the conference.

The Maritimers agreed that the Canadian proposals were of more interest than their original agenda. The delegates continued their discussions in Halifax, before returning home.

A second conference was held the following month in Quebec with additional delegates. The process continued in Montreal and was completed in Toronto with the specific proposals laid down that shaped the Canadian nation.

To ratify the proposals, the provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and United Canada sent their official delegates to London, England in 1866. Once again, there was agreement and the Parliament of the United Kingdom passed the British North America Act, effective July 1, 1867. It established the Dominion of Canada with its own federal system of government under the British Crown. Later, to Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec and Ontario were added Manitoba, British Columbia, Prince Edward Island, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Newfoundland.

This is the bare outline of Confederation. Matters were not nearly as smooth as this sketch might suggest. The whole story is not well-known, nor indeed is it agreed upon by all Canadians. It is our task to tell it briefly, without bias, and without losing its real and mostly attractive flavour.

Restored by Parks Canada to commemorate the Charlottetown Conference, Province House is Canada's Cradle of Confederation. (Parks Canada — J. Steeves)

The Charlottetown Conference — Common Ground.

The Canadians come to call.

Proposals for colonial union had occasionally surfaced for many years. Richard John Uniacke of Nova Scotia and the Cabinet of United Canada had each suggested it, but the idea had met with little enthusiasm and no action. When the Maritime colonies agreed that their own union should be the subject of a conference, Canada seized the opportunity and her governor wrote to ask if the Canadians might attend. The Maritimes set a date, September 1, 1864; the Canadians were invited to make their presentation, and the rest is history.

Unfortunately, there is no formal record of what was said during the Charlottetown meetings. What we know has been gathered from private sources, such as letters written home by delegates. We do know that there was agreement on a detailed discussion of the idea of union. We know that the Maritime delegates put aside their own poorly-supported ideas of Maritime Union, while the Canadians could see solutions to their own problems in a larger union.

Without doubt, external factors encouraged the consideration of a general union. Fears of what the United States might do when their Civil War was over were in every mind. All were aware of the growing desire of Britain that the North American colonies should look after themselves. Yet, it seems clear that what united many delegates, not only in opinion but in spirit, was the grand idea of a new nation.

The spirit of goodwill engendered by powerful politicians meeting each other on a matter of such attractive common interest was enhanced by the sincere and lavish hospitality that met them at every turn. Lunches on the Canadian steamer, *Queen Victoria,* home entertaining by the Island hosts and a culminating banquet by the City of Charlottetown kept the delegates in a euphoric mood. They enthusiastically journeyed on to Halifax and agreed to meet again in Quebec.

The delegates were photographed on the steps of Government House. (Public Archives Canada)

From left to right

1 *Charles Drinkwater, Private Secretary to John A. Macdonald*
2 *Hewitt Bernard, Secretary to John A. Macdonald*
3 *Alexander T. Galt, Canada*
4 *Charles Tupper, Nova Scotia*
5 *Edward B. Chandler, New Brunswick*
6 *Hector-Louis Langevin, Canada*
7 *Edward Palmer, Prince Edward Island*
8 *John Hamilton Gray, New Brunswick*
9 *Robert Dickey, Nova Scotia*
10 *George-Etienne Cartier, Canada*
11 *Thomas D'Arcy McGee, Canada*
12 *William A. Henry, Nova Scotia*
13 *John A. Macdonald, Canada*
14 *William H. Steeves, New Brunswick*
15 *John Hamilton Gray, Prince Edward Island*
16 *John M. Johnson, New Brunswick*
17 *Samuel L. Tilley, New Brunswick*
18 *Adams G. Archibald, Nova Scotia*
19 *Andrew A. Macdonald, Prince Edward Island*
20 *William Campbell, Canada*
21 *William MacDougall, Canada*
22 *George Coles, Prince Edward Island*
23 *William H. Pope, Prince Edward Island*
24 *Jonathan McCully, Nova Scotia*
25 *George Brown, Canada*

The Victorian Spirit. Charlottetown throws a party at Province House.

On the final night of the conference, September 8, the City of Charlottetown hosted a banquet and ball in Province House, transformed for the occasion from political arena to grand hotel. The legislative council chamber, where the delegates had so recently reached their momentous agreement, now served as a gracious drawing room. Refreshments were available in the library while the assembly chamber was transformed into a ballroom, with evergreens, flowers and flags. There, under the brilliant gas light, delegates and their partners danced to the music of two Charlottetown bands playing in the gallery above. At midnight the throng adjourned to the ground floor supreme courtroom where a magnificent banquet was waiting. Toasts and speeches expressed the goodwill and optimism felt by the delegates after their week of discussion.

A humourous newspaper parody described the supposed lavishness of the ball at Province House:
A few days after the close of the circus, a great public "Ball and Supper" is announced . . . the proud and the gay, arrayed in fashion's gauds, flock to the scene where revelry presides; the balls glow with gay trappings and gorgeous decorations; the lights are brilliant as the stars of heaven. Pleasure panoplied in lustful smiles meets and embraces exuberant Joy . . . and the saint who could not tolerate Satan in the circus, embraces the Prince of Darkness in the gilded scene of fashion's vices, and the reeking slough of debauchery.
Ross's Weekly, Charlottetown, September 15, 1864.

This painting by Dusan Kadlec depicts the glittering ball at Province House. (Parks Canada/Themadel Foundation)

The Quebec Conference — Cards On The Table.

Proposals are specific and agreement is general.

The delegates met again on October 10, in Quebec City and again, those from United Canada were well-prepared and took the initiative. By October 28 seventy-two resolutions had the general support of the delegates.

This meeting was larger, with two extra delegates from New Brunswick and two more from Prince Edward Island. Newfoundland also sent two representatives.

First, it was agreed that the model for the government of the new country should be that of the United Kingdom, a constitutional

monarchy, with two houses in the legislature. The lower house, to be known as the Commons, should be elected according to population. The upper house, the Senate, should be appointed, with the numbers fixed so as to give the smaller provinces some protection if population growth continued to be uneven.

Although many delegates from both Canada West and the Maritimes favoured a legislative union with a single central government, this had little appeal to those from Canada East who wanted to retain a local government to protect their language, laws and customs. A federal union was therefore a political necessity. As finally resolved, the provincial governments were limited in their powers while the federal government was given all powers not specifically granted to the provinces.

On financial matters, there were misgivings and protests, but the Canadian proposals prevailed. The Maritimes, especially Prince Edward Island, feared that giving up customs duties would leave them at the mercy of the proposed subsidies from the central government. Facing the prospect of losing her main source of revenue, the Island had another serious problem with absentee landowners. The Island had to weigh the consequences of union faced with no offer of help from the Canadians, financial or otherwise, to deal with these concerns.

Preliminary sketch by the Canadian artist Robert Harris of his portrait of the Fathers of Confederation at Quebec. The original was destroyed when the Parliament Buildings burnt in 1916. (Permanent Collection, Confederation Centre Art Gallery and Museum)

Doubts. Giving and taking, there may be losers.

Joseph Howe became the spokesman for opponents of Confederation in Nova Scotia. (Public Archives of Nova Scotia)

The shape of the future nation grew clearer after the Quebec Conference and enthusiasm was not general. Provincial legislatures survived, but with limited scope, while the Maritimes had lost control over their business affairs, most importantly over customs. Hereafter, protection for industries along the St. Lawrence/Great Lakes system would mean the end of cheap imports for them, and their own exports would face retaliatory duties. Export into the heartland would always be but a dream.

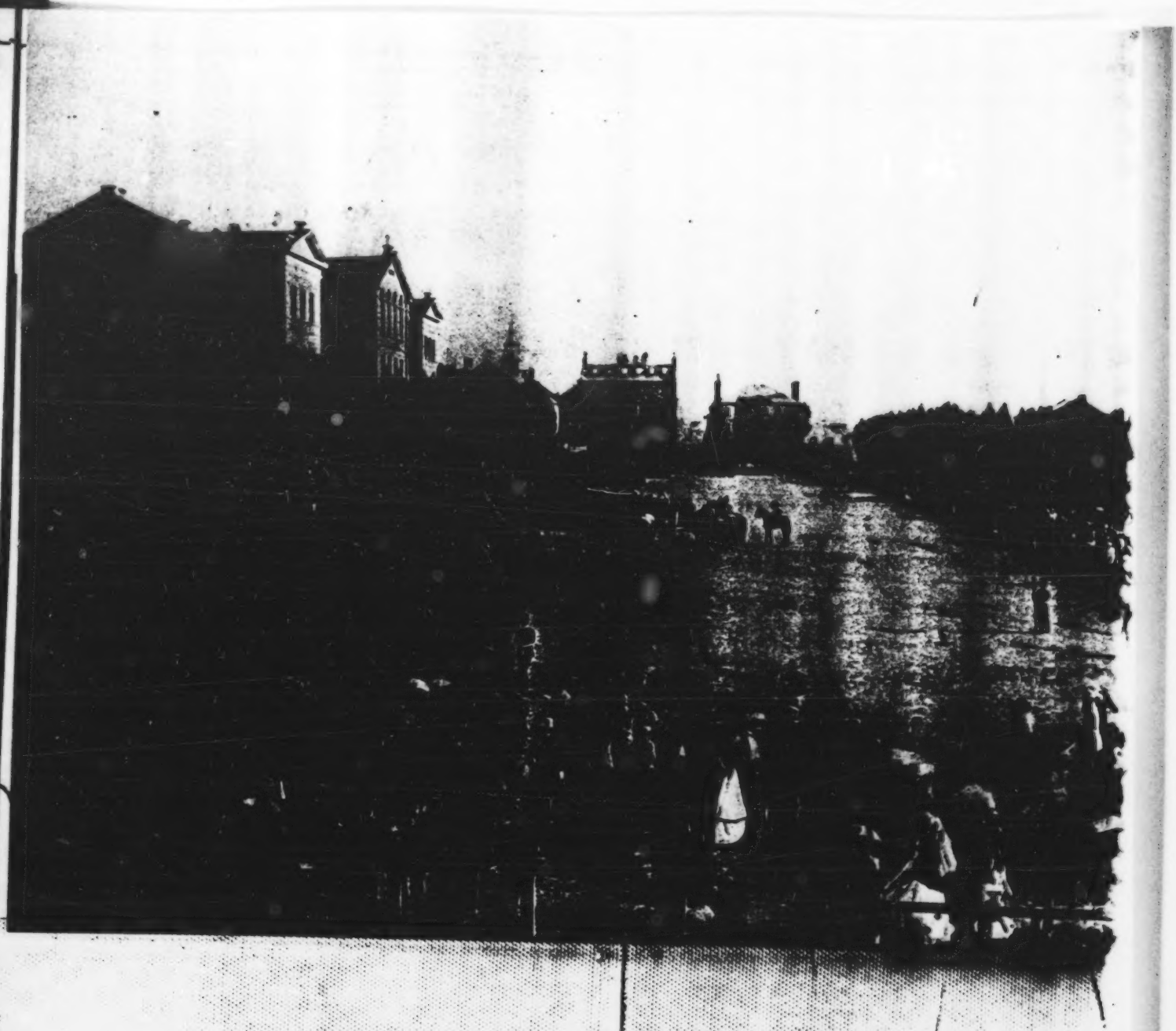
For New Brunswick, the location of the promised railway was a hot issue. Saint John wanted it to come down the St. John River with a spur to Portland, Maine, while the British authorities favoured a line down the east coast, safely away from the United States border. Leonard Tilley, a strong supporter of Confederation, lost an election over this and Albert Smith, his successor, opposed Confederation.

In Nova Scotia the apparent loss of control over its destiny provoked strong opposition. Joseph Howe soon emerged as the leading spokesman. Public meetings and newspaper articles hotly debated the pros and cons of union. For his part, Premier Charles Tupper was careful not to risk putting the Quebec Resolutions to the people or to the House of Assembly.

Prince Edward Island had heard enough. No agreement had been reached to buy the vast tracts of land owned by absentee landlords. At the same time, the Island's chief source of revenue, customs duties, was to be removed and replaced by a subsidy at the behest of a legislature where the Island's presence would be hardly noticeable. Prince Edward Island was proud, self-reliant and practically debt-free. Why she should give up this security for a western dream was not apparent. The Island sent no delegates to London and withdrew from further discussions.

While Newfoundland's two delegates returned home filled with enthusiasm for Confederation, the legislature and the merchants of St. John's could see only a threat to their traditional trading patterns. Newfoundland lost interest and it was eighty years before she regained it.

Many prosperous Maritimers saw little gain from Confederation. Saint John New Brunswick, 1870. (Notman Photographic Archives)



The Fenians. The Fenians help where they want to hurt.

Events in North America had never depended just on local developments. Irish hostility to British rule in Ireland had found fertile soil in the eastern United States, especially during the Civil War, when indignation was high at Britain's clear sympathy for the South.

The Fenians were a quasi-military society of Irish-Americans who hoped to shake Britain out of Ireland in return for colonies they planned to capture in North America. Their incursions across the Canadian border, not serious in themselves, caused panic in Canada and alarm even in the Maritimes. The local militia was called up and military authorities in Nova Scotia sent naval units to the Bay of Fundy. In New Brunswick, Leonard Tilley was returned to power and a resolution was passed in the legislature for a further conference to consider Confederation.

The Fenian threat also pushed Nova Scotia closer to union. During the alarm, Nova Scotia, after bitter debate, passed a resolution calling for a further conference to consider the union of the colonies. It is important to realize that in no way did this represent any support for the specific resolutions developed at Quebec. Rather, both Nova Scotia and New Brunswick supported a fresh start to negotiations. This was not to be. Any official expression of support for union was all that Tupper, the Canadians and the British Colonial Office needed. The conference was called, delegates from the three colonies went off to London, and the curtain went up on the final act in the Confederation drama.

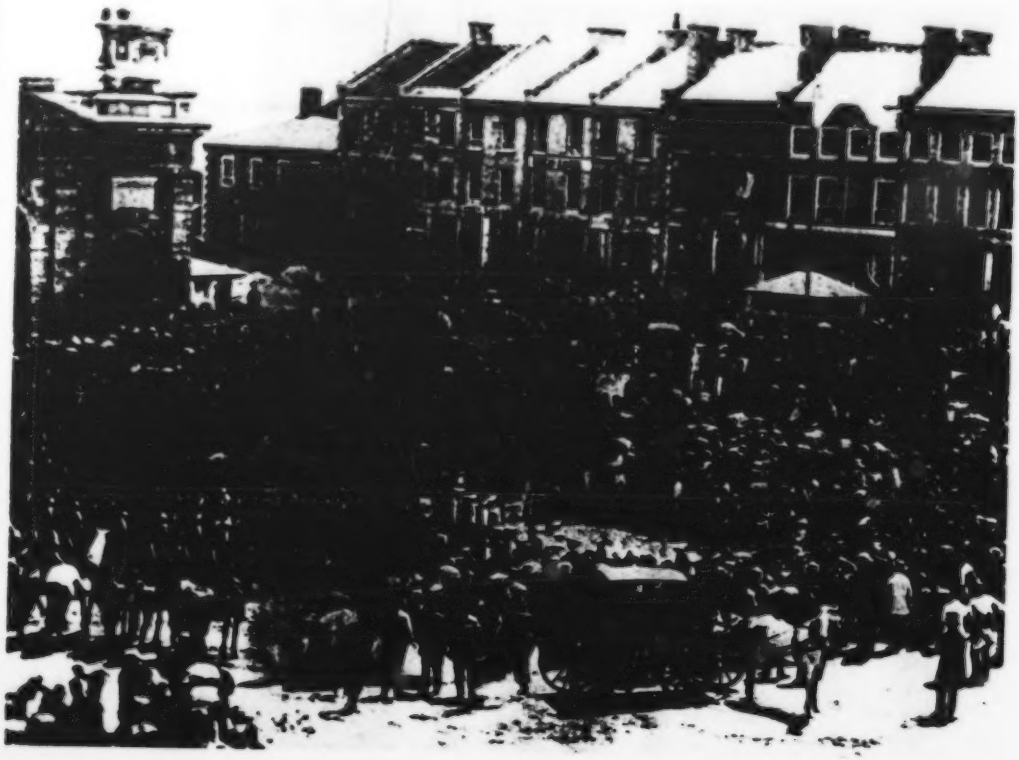
Welcome address to the returning volunteers after the Fenian raids, Champ de Mars, Montreal, 1866. (Notman Photographic Archives)

The London Conference. The Mother Country wants her children to get together and run their own affairs.

In London, delegates favoured the seventy-two Quebec Resolutions. Joseph Howe went along to present to the British his petition with thirty thousand names against union, but the British knew what they wanted. A bill based on the Quebec Resolutions was

One of the leaders of the Canadian delegation, John A. Macdonald was knighted by Queen Victoria and appointed Canada's first prime minister. (Public Archives Canada)

Medal struck to commemorate Confederation. (Archives of Ontario)



Reading the proclamation of Confederation, Kingston, Ontario, July 1, 1867. (Queen's University Archives, Kingston)

put to the Parliament of the United Kingdom, quickly passed the House of Commons and the House of Lords and was signed by the Queen. The new nation was a fact, for better or for worse. The Governor General and Lieutenant Governors were appointed, senators named and John A. Macdonald asked to head the new government.

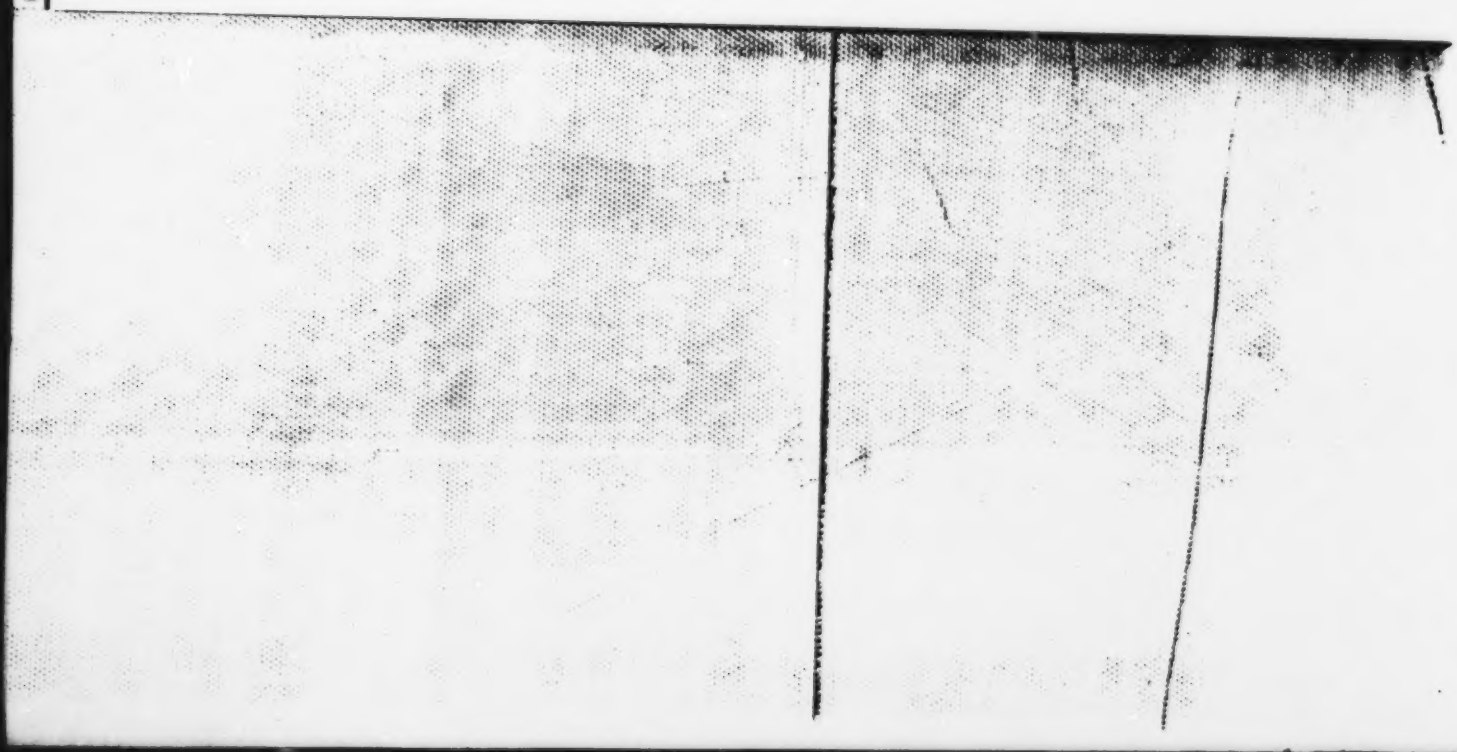
British North America now had a manifest destiny, even as her cousin to the south.

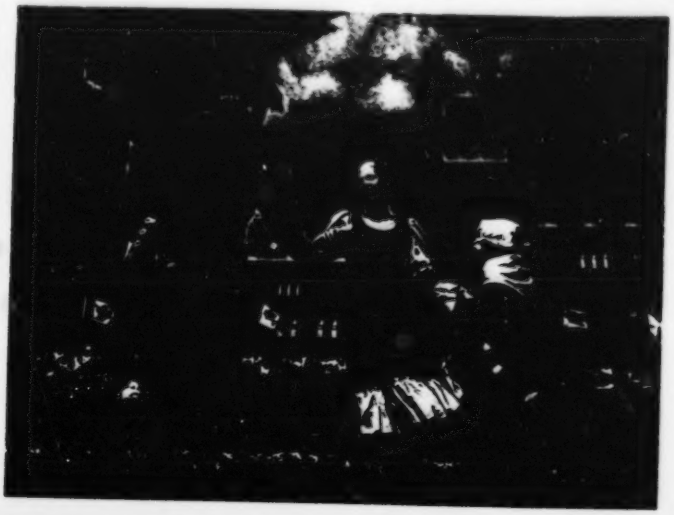
Afterthoughts. Both events and methods leave some bitterness.

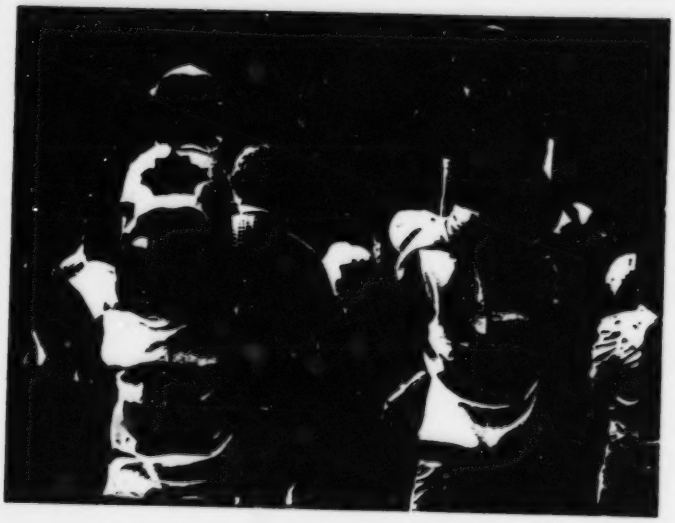
The question of whether the end justifies the means haunts the Confederation story. Certainly, manoeuvres to avoid ascertaining the will of the people in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia were skilfully executed. Widespread opposition to union in Nova Scotia was reflected in succeeding elections that swept out those who had acted on its behalf. July 1, 1867 was celebrated in every way from rejoicing to funeral notices and black crepe in the streets.

Union, however, was now the law of the land and resistance bordered on disloyalty. Gradually the new nationality became a matter of pride. Immigration, the succession of generations, and two World Wars helped erase the doubts and transform Canada into a confident nation.

In contrast to the mixed response of 1867, 1967, Canada's Centennial year, was a time of celebration.
(left and upper right: Malak; lower right: Miller Services)







LOOKING BACK

The Lost Colonies. The influence of the United States.

The forces at work during Confederation grew out of the pattern of European settlement and politics in North America. North of the Spanish possessions, French, British and native peoples enacted a drama that produced the United States, then Canada. We have the advantage of hindsight, but at the time it was quite uncertain what would be the outcome of these power struggles. The east to west border we now have unites old enemies and separates old friends and relatives.

It is roughly accurate to say that the British settled along the coast of North America while the French followed the rivers. French forts, trade and settlement followed the St. Lawrence, Ohio and Mississippi Rivers, forming an inland barrier to British expansion.

Following the defeat of the French in 1763, the British colonies moved inland, became conscious of their own power and no longer needed the protection of British sea power. Were it not for the British base at Halifax, Nova Scotia might well have joined the thirteen southern-most colonies in their violent bid for independence, resulting in the United States. What remained of British North America after 1783 consisted almost entirely of lands that had first been settled by the French.

Many people in the thirteen colonies had not supported independence. More than forty thousand abandoned the new republic for the remaining British colonies in the north.

Both Canada and Nova Scotia had massive infusions of new people who felt that Britain owed them a great deal and who were willing to put forth great effort to have their new life make up for what they had lost. These were the United Empire Loyalists, who were instrumental in the creation of New Brunswick and Ontario.

In 1812, the United States unsuccessfully attacked British North America. Many Loyalists regarded the war as one of revenge, and they harboured constant uneasiness about what their former compatriots might do by way of extending their territory. During the American Civil War in the early 1860's the North bitterly resented the friendship of the British for the South and at war's end, it was not unreasonable to fear that the mighty Northern army might turn on the British colonies. Forays across the border by the Fenians crystallized this fear. Coupled with pressure from Britain to assume responsibility for their own defence, it drove the British colonies together.

When delegates to the Quebec Conference were discussing the form of the new government, many pointed to the recent traumatic experience of their neighbour to the south. They argued that the strength of the individual states was one of the causes of the Civil War. This view prevailed, with the result that only certain limited powers went to the provinces.

Again, the action of the United States in terminating the Reciprocity Treaty of 1854 struck hard at the economies of the Maritimes and led them to appreciate the benefits of doing business with the inland colonies instead of their traditional partners along the seaboard.

In short, the ex-British colonies, now states united, had a great influence on the identities, sympathies, ideas and fears of the remaining British colonies that became Canada. It would be very

In the War of 1812, British naval power was again decisive. A highlight of the sea war was the capture of the American frigate Chesapeake *by the smaller H.M.S.* Shannon. *The painting shows the* Chesapeake *brought to Halifax as a prize of war. (Maritime Museum of the Atlantic)*

(Library of Congress)

difficult to tell the story of the United States without including Louisbourg, Halifax, and Quebec at least, but it is quite impossible to tell of Canada without constant reference to the lost colonies.

"The first gun fired at Fort Sumter had a message for us."

Thomas D'Arcy McGee, referring to the American Civil War

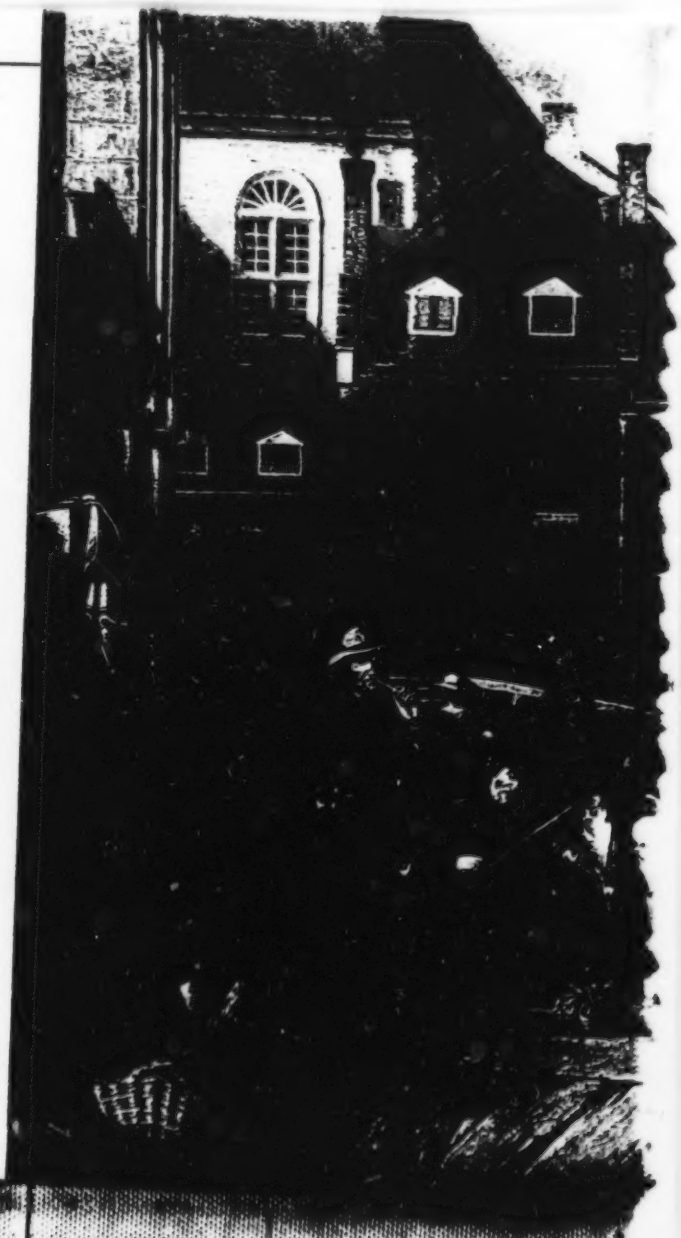
La Belle Province. Quebec has a history, a memory and a soul of her own.

The Quebec that emerged in 1867 consisted of the lands bordering the St. Lawrence River. Her predecessor was Canada East in United Canada, which succeeded Lower Canada. Before that, she had been part of New France, whose lands extended from the Atlantic far to the west, and south to the Gulf of Mexico.

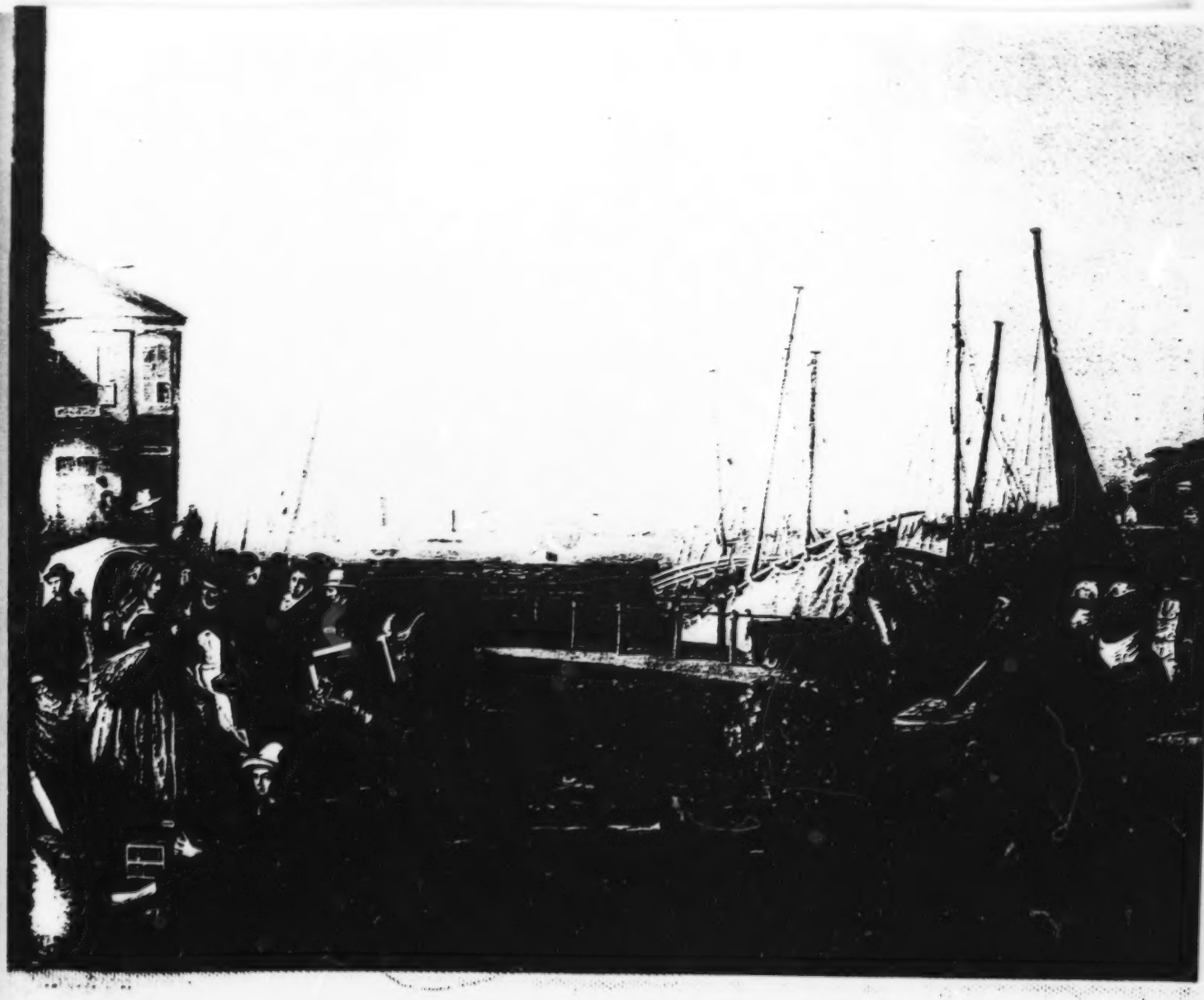
New France was conquered as part of a worldwide struggle for empire. In the peace that followed, Quebec prospered, but the sting of conquest was always there. She was determined to survive culturally, at least, and politically, if possible.

After union in 1840, Canada West and Canada East had an equal number of seats in the single legislature. When Canada West's smaller population outgrew that of Canada East, demands grew in Canada West for representation by population. This would ensure an English-speaking majority in the legislature. Canada East, predominantly French-speaking, saw "rep by pop" as a potential threat to its language, laws and religion. This impasse helped to spur the Canadians to join the Charlottetown Conference to look for a fresh solution.

When a new and greater Canada was proposed, Canada East entered graciously into the arrangements that made Confederation possible. The character of our country as a land of accommodation and compromise has been necessary from the beginning, shaping our attitudes to newcomers from other cultures. Indeed, accommodation, compromise and reasonableness are cornerstones of the Canadian culture, and widely acknowledged as such.



The towns of Canada bustled with activity; her prosperity was based on the products of her rich farmland and developing industry. Behind Bonsecours Market, Montreal, 1866, *William Raphael. (National Gallery of Canada)*



Land of the Sea. From the sea and of the sea, Nova Scotia finds it difficult to turn inland.

Nova Scotia had at various times included Cape Breton Island, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick and part of Maine. Even before the French settlements, European fishermen had been there. She had been a battleground and a prize in wars, and had been ambivalent when the British colonies to the south rebelled. Living by and on the sea, she had faced outward and been a part of the world.

Politically, Nova Scotia was mature and competent. Canada was far away and she was more comfortable with the United States. She was uneasy with the States, however, as she was a base of British naval and military forces and indeed, a linchpin of Empire.

To join with the inland colonies might make for greater security, but Nova Scotia was aware that policy in external affairs would then be made by inlanders who faced the west. It was small wonder that federation, with its doubtful benefits and obvious risks, was met with considerable scepticism.

British and world-wise as she was, Nova Scotia was simply unsure where her duty and self-interest lay.

The commercial center of Halifax, rebuilt after the disastrous fire of 1895. (Public Archives of Nova Scotia)

Nova Scotia's farflung commerce had brought prosperity and confidence. Port of Halifax, *around 1820, John Poad Drake. (National Gallery of Canada)*

Refugees, Refugees. Founded as a refuge for Loyalists, New Brunswick had already been a haven for returning members of our other founding race.

New Brunswick was formed from Nova Scotia's western mainland in order to give Loyalist refugees from the United States a seat of government near their settlements along the St. John River. Having abandoned all their hard work to the south, these new citizens used their proven skills to begin the job of building New Brunswick.

The Loyalists in New Brunswick joined another exiled group, the Acadians who had been deported from their fertile lands in old *Acadie* during the climax of the British-French struggle in North America. Returning later, the Acadians found their old lands occupied by settlers from New England and continued north to what became New Brunswick.

New Brunswick's economic interests were, like Nova Scotia's turned outward. They also lived largely by export, and distrusted the proposed loss of control over customs. New Brunswickers viewed the proposed Intercolonial Railway as an absolute necessity for Confederation. Like the Nova Scotians, they were divided about where their duty and best interests lay.

Built by the Wrights of Saint John, the Dundonald *was typical of many ships launched in the Maritimes during the golden age of sail. (New Brunswick Museum)*

Very British Americans. The Loyalists in Ontario are yoked with historic foes and become very British indeed.

After the Revolution, migrating Loyalists settled along the St. Lawrence River above the French areas onward to Lake Ontario and in spots along the lake-side. They picked fertile and strategic locations, favouring the Niagara and St. Clair River regions. Energetic as in New Brunswick, their prosperous developments attracted immigrants from abroad.

Resentment at the near monopoly of government position and patronage by a small group called the Family Compact sparked rebellion in 1837. A similar uprising in Lower Canada led the British government to appoint a commission of enquiry under Lord Durham. His recommendations resulted in the union of the two Canadas.

Years of uneasy, bitter relationships brought problems in governing and United Canada sought solutions by constitutional reform. The Charlottetown Conference supplied a larger context and the ultimate shape of Canada was largely the result of hard work and determined leadership by men from what became Ontario.

At Confederation, United Canada was the largest and most populous colony with over 2½ million inhabitants. Toronto and Montreal were growing centres of economic power. King Street, Toronto, 1868. (Notman Photographic Archives)

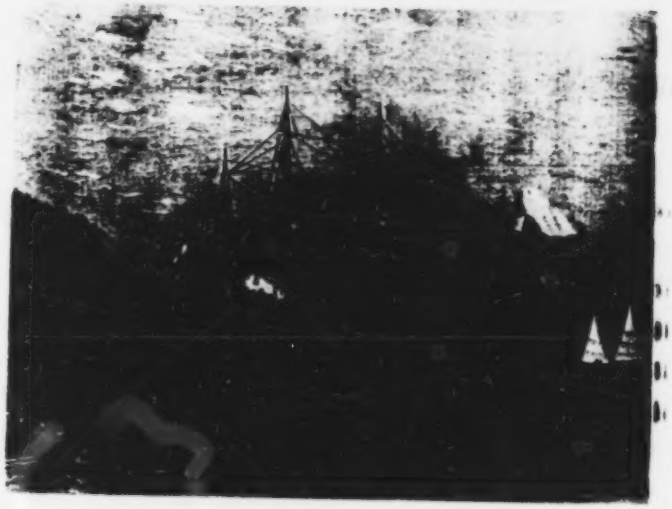
Although agriculture was still the basis of the Canadian economy at the time of Confederation, industrial development was already bringing wealth to the province. (Royal Ontario Museum)

CANADA GROWS

From Sea to Sea. British Columbia asks for and gets her Pacific railway.

Far to the west, Captains Cook and Vancouver had been followed by other adventurers and by fishermen, loggers and settlers. Two British colonies were established on the Pacific coast between the Americans to the south and the Russians to the north. Trade and migration brought the British and Americans into close contact; the United States eyed the coast and unofficially, pushed northward. If they were to remain British, Vancouver Island and British Columbia would have to act. First, they united in 1866 and by 1870, had begun negotiations with the new country, Canada.

Isolation was the problem; the solution was a railway, to be begun within two years and completed within the decade. This agreed, British Columbia entered Confederation on July 20, 1871. The astounding difficulties facing the building of a transcontinental railway were not fully realized. That is another saga, crucial to understanding the formation of Canada's character.

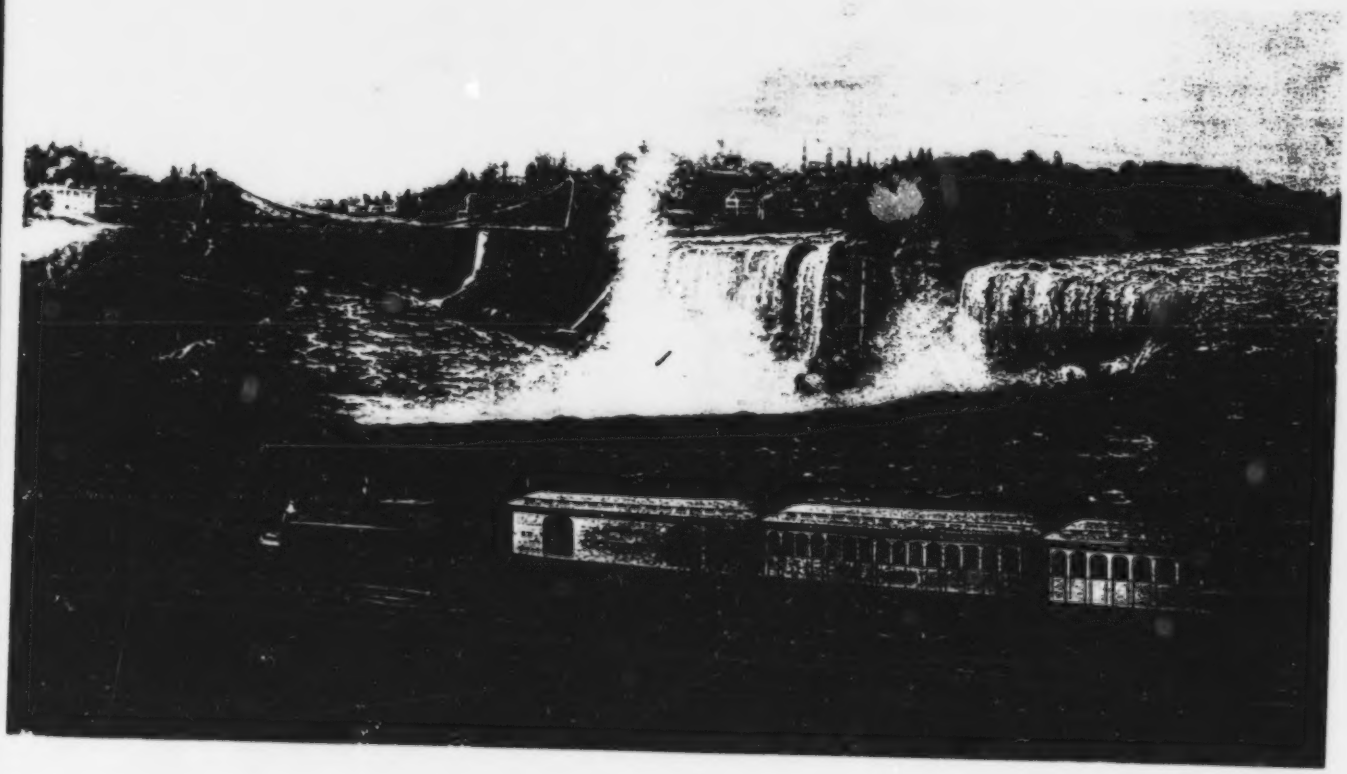


Ships of the Royal Navy stationed on the west coast helped to maintain a British presence in the face of gradual American expansionism. (Public Archives Canada)

No Choice. With too few people to pay for a railway, Prince Edward Island makes a proclamation from Province House.

Having stayed out of Confederation, Prince Edward Island set about building her own railway and discovered the unhappiness of debt. Canada made proposals in 1869 that were refused because they did not solve the problem of ownership of land. By 1872, caught between railway debts and improved offers from Canada, Prince Edward Island was ready to negotiate and entered Confederation on July 1, 1873.

Railways were a political necessity of the time but their high construction costs brought new problems. The Canadian Southern Railway at Niagara *(National Gallery of Canada)*



Ties that Bind. Canada was laced together with rails, thus defying geography.

It was natural that the colonies of North America, whether French or British, should be discovered and settled by water. First by sea, and then by lake and river, discovery, trade, settlement and industry went on.

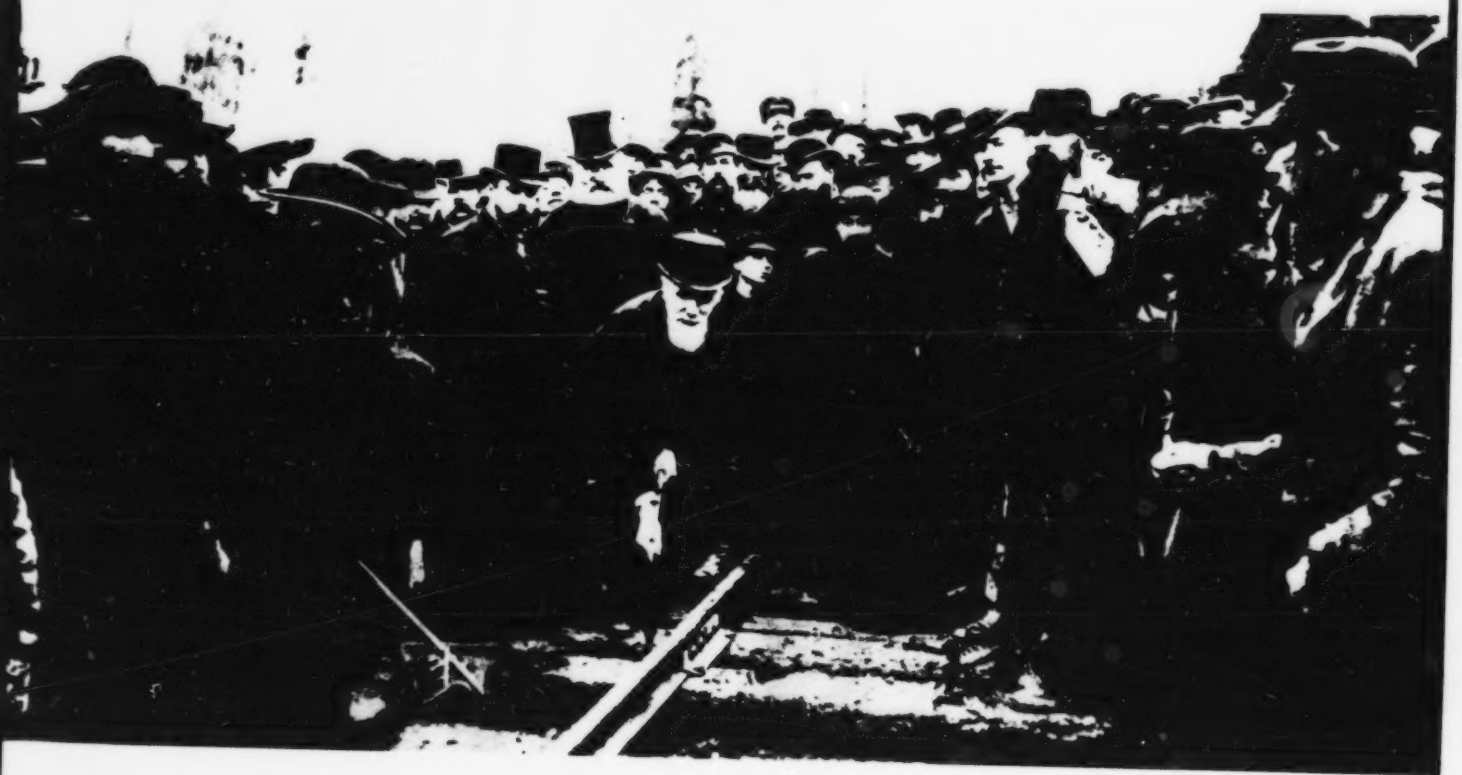
By the time of Confederation, a new factor had appeared that would change the terms. Railways took over, first in Britain, then everywhere. New trade routes, resources, settlements and concentrated industry resulted from development of rich lands not served by water routes.

In the United States, the pattern was set, and the Fathers of Confederation, who looked west, thought in terms of rail. Already a line went from Sarnia to Rivière-du-Loup with a spur to Portland, Maine. If the Maritimes were to be brought in, how could rail connection not be part of the arrangement? The proposed Intercolonial had been considered and turned down, or at least postponed by the British. Therefore, guarantees about the railway and its location were crucial questions.

Of course, railways were vital in the west as well. Settlement of the vast lands transferred from the Hudson's Bay Company required a rail link with the east while completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1885 fulfilled the agreement that British Columbia had exacted as the price of union.

(Corporate Archives, Canadian Pacific)

Donald Smith drives the last spike for the Canadian Pacific Railway at Craigellachie, British Columbia, on November 7, 1885. (Corporate Archives, Canadian Pacific)



Restless Roots. A big land and its people sort themselves out.

(Corporate Archives, Canadian Pacific)

France and the British Isles provided the first immigrants. Then came the Loyalists, nearly all speaking English. Even before Confederation, new settlers had arrived from mainland Europe as well as Ireland and Scotland. With the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway, immigration flooded the prairies with Germans, Ukranians, Russians and Icelanders, as well as settlers from nearly every country in Europe. The building of the railway employed large numbers of Chinese, who stayed to make Canada their home. The Japanese too, followed the railway and helped to settle British Columbia.

Much of the migration to the west of Canada was by those who already had settled in the east. From the Maritimes and Ontario, and in smaller numbers from Quebec, settlers went to the Prairie Provinces and British Columbia. Of those who went to help with harvesting, many stayed to establish new homes.

Not all movement was into the new country. French-speaking Quebecers often sought opportunities in the New England States. So did the Maritimers, many of whose ancestors had come from New England as Planters or Loyalists.

The native people generally have not moved about in the same way. They have, however, intermarried with the settlers, producing some new groups, such as the Métis.

The pattern of immigration and migration has continued, influenced by whatever is currently shaping our history, be it world wars or economic disparity.

Altogether, Canada is a country of settlers and re-settlers. Blends there are, but most Canadians have an abiding pride in their origins.

(Public Archives Canada)

(Public Archives Canada)

Home is Where the Heartland is. The vast plains and the land-hungry get together to create three more provinces.

The land between the Great Lakes and the western mountains was known to be vast and rich. Traders, trappers and surveyors had become very well-acquainted with its grasslands, waters, rolling hills and wildlife. It was simply too valuable to be held by a fur company forever. By 1867, the Hudson's Bay Company had entered into negotiations to turn administration of its holdings over to the new country.

The largest settlement was on the Red River near Lake Winnipeg. It had no constitutional basis as a colony and so could not enter into a federation of colonies. Difference of opinion regarding the future brought open conflict between settlers from Canada West and the Métis and this hastened the entry of the new Province of Manitoba into Confederation in 1870.

The construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway speeded settlement and in 1882, the Territories of Assiniboia, Saskatchewan and Alberta were set up. In 1905, these became the new provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta.

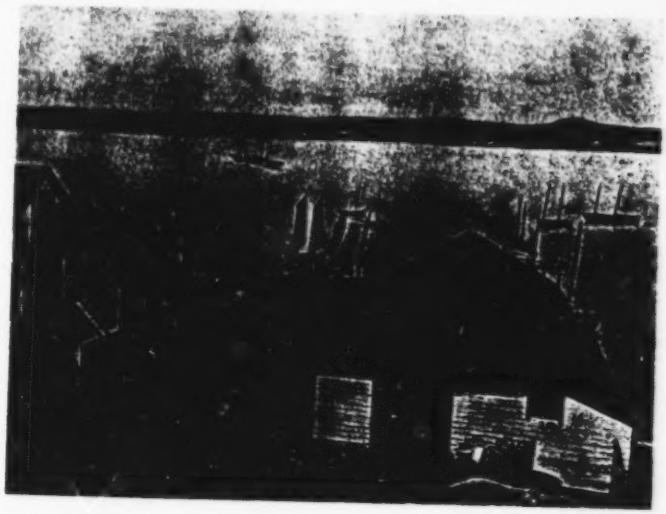
The vast lands of the Prairies offered many opportunities for adventurous pioneers. (Royal Ontario Museum)

Oldest Colony, Newest Province. Like Prince Edward Island somewhat earlier, Newfoundland needs a little encouragement.

Newfoundland, the oldest of Britain's North American colonies, remained somewhat aloof from the continent's affairs compared to the other colonies. Unlike Nova Scotia, Newfoundland was not closely tied to the New England colonies and when the break came, there was no great influx of Loyalists to shake up the established order. Newfoundland, even more than Nova Scotia, was truly a land of the sea and the mother country had long discouraged settlement, regarding the island as a solid rock fishing station.

When a greater Canada was proposed to the other colonies, there was little to attract Newfoundland. A railway to the mainland meant nothing and, in fact, the interior of Newfoundland was hardly significant as she was a coastal community. Fear of the Fenians would have been merely amusing to the outports. Consequently, when the delegates returned from Quebec, neither the rich in St. John's nor the poor and proud along the coast could see any reason for loosening ties with the Old Country. Newfoundland waited.

Fourscore years later, having experienced Dominion status and caretaking by Britain, Newfoundland weighed her options and joined Canada, becoming one of the Atlantic Provinces once more, but losing little of her unique culture.



Dependent on the sea for her livelihood, Newfoundland shared few of the concerns of her fellow colonies to the west. (Public Archives Canada)

Town and Harbour of St. John's from Signal Hill, 1831, William Eagar. (Public Archives Canada)

Tomorrow. Nation-building is not over; we have a lot to work with and the outlook is promising.

Confederation is the story of the union of some provinces, the subsequent entry and creation of others and the expansion of some.

The process continues with shifting patterns of population growth, varying cultures, developing resources, industry and trade. Canada, founded on accommodation and compromise, should be capable of making the adjustments required for continuing nationhood. Any sober assessment of Confederation so far would suggest that the faith of the Founding Fathers and the caution of others were both well-taken.

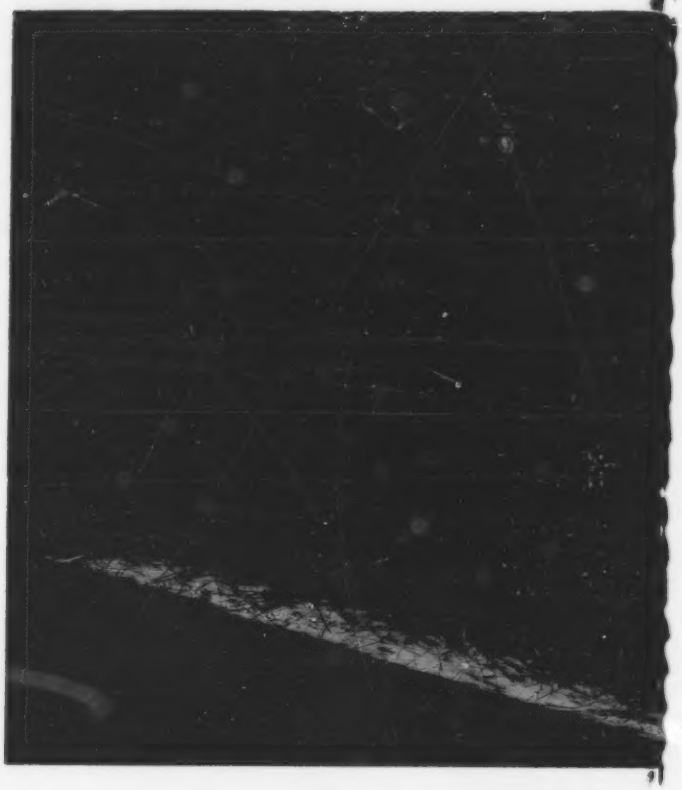
Queen Elizabeth II, accompanied by Prime Minister Pierre-Elliott Trudeau, signs the Royal Proclamation bringing Canada's new constitution into force. Parliament Hill, April 1982. (Public Archives Canada/Photo by Robert Cooper, 539, frame 19A)

PART II

Province House

Province House. 'Cradle of Confederation'.

Queen Square, dominated by Province House, was the centre of Charlottetown life. Charlottetown from Hughes' Corner, *George Hubbard. (The Collection of the Prince Edward Island Museum and Heritage Foundation)*



Province House, recognized and honoured as the 'Cradle of Confederation', is a stately and well-built structure that proved an ideal setting for the events that led to the formation of Canada.

"The Building is an honour to the Island and seems to command a feeling of pride and satisfaction in all who visit it." These sentiments were expressed in a Charlottetown newspaper at the official opening in 1847 of the Island's new Colonial Building (later known as Province House) and reflected a general mood of self-congratulation. Islanders felt justifiable pride in the construction of a public administrative building that compared favourably with those in the other colonial capitals. The Island's status was well represented by this fine new structure that soon became the focus of her public life. More than a century and a quarter later, Province House retains its central place in the Island community.

Drawing of Province House, probably by architect Isaac Smith. (Public Archives Canada)

Before Province House. Their hands were tied . . .

Although the colony of Prince Edward Island was granted her own government in 1769, for many years she lacked the authority to tax land for improvements and little progress was made in construction of public buildings. The land was mostly owned in Great Britain where, in 1767 it had been granted by lottery to about a hundred prominent officials. These absentee owners had obligations to bring out settlers and to pay rents but few took action. In 1832 the colony gained authority to tax for local improvements and built a home for the lieutenant governor two years later.

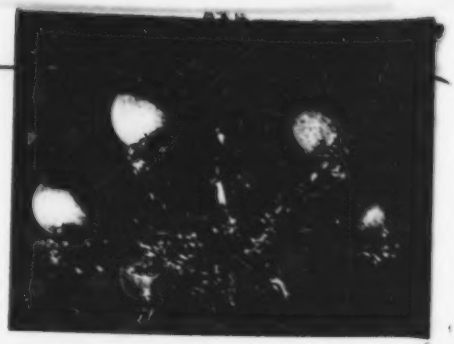
Isaac Smith, architect and builder of Province House. (Mrs. Marianne Morrow)

The Supreme Court and the legislature, however, were still without a permanent home. At first they met in private homes and taverns and, as a door keeper to the legislature remarked, this made for 'a damn queer Parliament'. In 1837 the lieutenant governor, Sir John Harvey, made plain to the legislature his alarm at the colony having no building for the safe custody of its public records. No one could disagree, and there was warm support for a vote of £5,000 to provide for this purpose and to house the two branches of the legislature, as well as colonial offices.

Delayed by slow British confirmation of this proposal, action began in 1839 with a public design competition. The additional need of accommodation for the Supreme Court further delayed matters until the legislature voted another £5,000 in 1842.

The competition was won by the leading Island architect/builder, Isaac Smith, who had been responsible for most of the Island's existing public buildings. With no formal architectural training but, by his own efforts, carpenter, master builder and very good architect, his work stands the test of time and comparison.

Built By Islanders. Island builders show what they can do.



Gas chandelier in restored room. (Parks Canada)

Isaac Smith's plans were for a three-storey stone structure of classic proportions and detail with central portico and substantial columns. This was in keeping with 19th century interest in Greek and Roman styles for public buildings and was thought particularly suitable for a legislature.

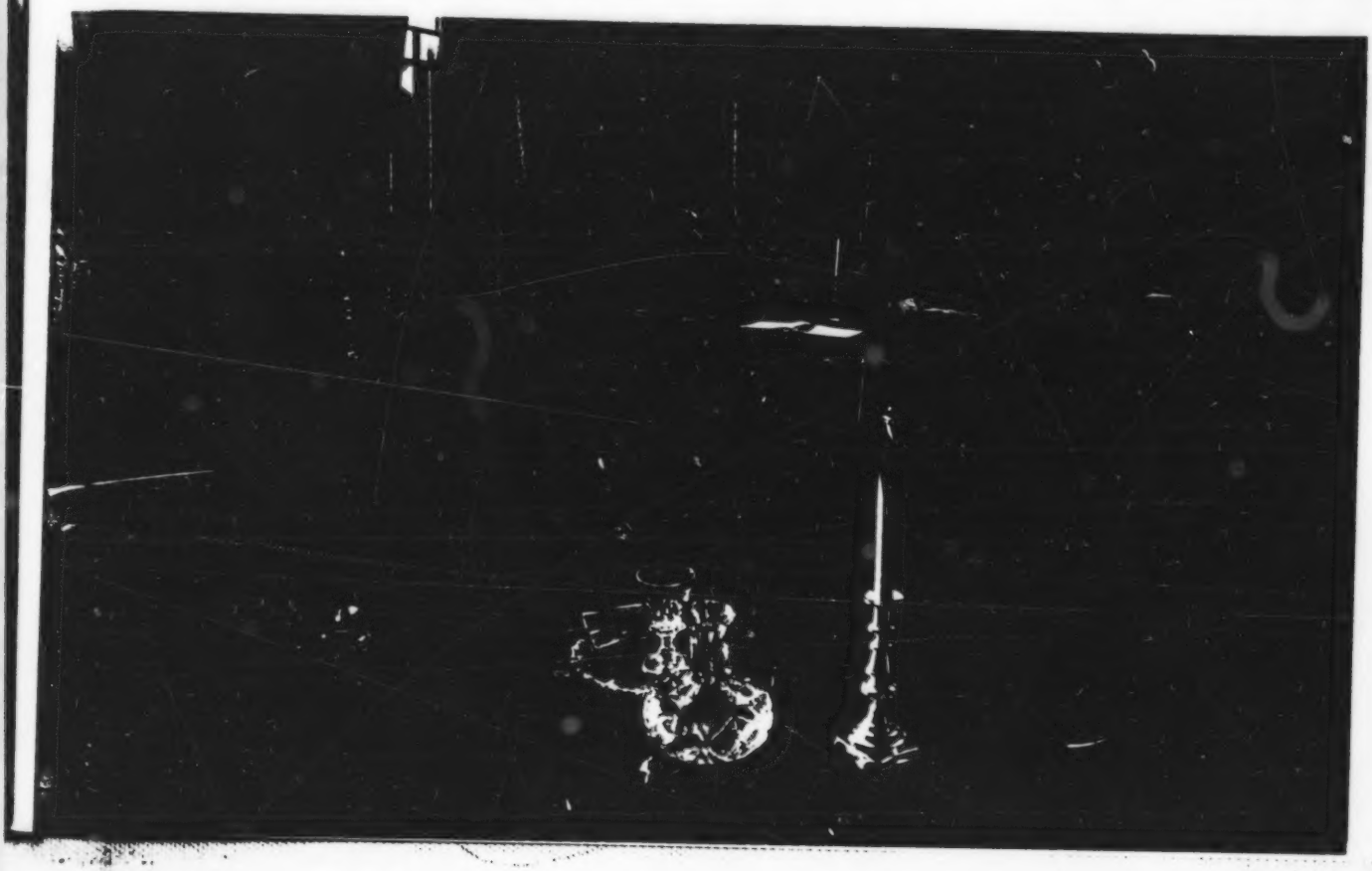
When tenders for trades were accepted, it was found necessary to leave the Island only for stone, which was brought from Nova Scotia. Stone-masonry, brick-laying, carpentry, joinery, plastering, slating, painting, glazing, sheet metal working and excavating were all done by Islanders, proud that the new Colonial Building was indeed a local accomplishment.

However, since construction estimates exceeded the voted sums by £3,000, the design was simplified by eliminating several features. The cornerstone was laid in May, 1843, with a band, a parade, and a speech by the lieutenant governor just some of the events marking the occasion.

When the building had reached half its planned height and its proportions were obvious, public demand brought back most of the features deleted for economy. For three years the work continued until finally the contracts for furnishings were let to local craftsmen.

The first session of the Prince Edward Island Legislature, held in the new Colonial Building in January 1847, marked the official opening of the structure. The small Island community had designed, built and furnished a major public building comparable to those in other British colonies in North America. The Colonial Building represented the epitome of Island craftsmanship of the mid 19th century, a time of unprecedented prosperity and optimism.

Restored library/conference room. (Parks Canada — J. Steeves)

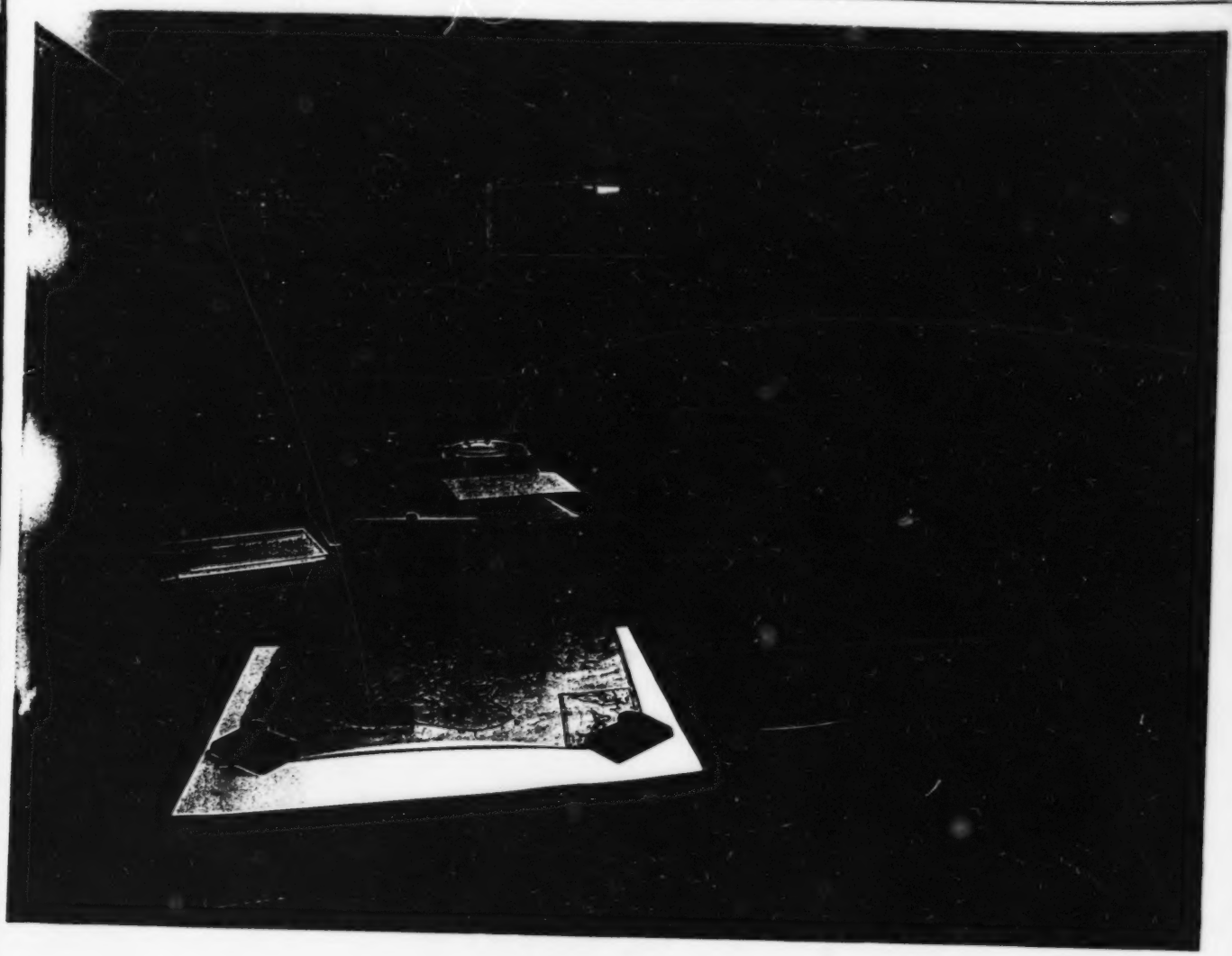


The Colonial Building. Government under one roof . . .

The Colonial Building, or Province House as it became known, was at the centre of Island public life. All branches of the government and judiciary were housed there. The assembly and the legislative council met in spacious chambers on the second storey while downstairs the Supreme Court occupied quarters spanning the east end of the building. Along the ground floor corridor were the offices of the civil administration, responsible for all aspects of colonial government.

The most important officials were the colonial secretary, registrar of deeds, commissioner of public lands, colonial treasurer and attorney-general. The premier was usually also attorney-general if he were trained in the law, or colonial secretary otherwise. The busiest official was probably the commissioner of lands, who bought estates from absentee landlords, had them surveyed, and sold portions to Islanders.

Land surveyors' instruments help create the ambience of the past in the office of the crown land officer. (Parks Canada — J. Steeves)



King George VI and Queen Elizabeth on the balcony of Province House, June 1939. (Public Archives Canada)

The lack of municipal institutions in Prince Edward Island made Province House even more the centre of Island government. Charlottetown did not become a city until 1855 and county municipalities did not assume legislative powers as in other provinces. The Island government was therefore responsible for many local concerns. Similarly, the absence of county courts until 1873 meant that the Supreme Court handled all administration of justice above the level of the local magistrate. Accessible to anyone on the Island, Charlottetown and Province House were the natural focus of Island public life.

Province House was for many years the centre of Island social life as well. Until the development of larger hotels with improved dining facilities later in the 19th century, Province House was frequently the scene of official entertainment for distinguished visitors. The spacious public rooms served in turn as drawing and reception rooms, banquet hall and ballroom.

These grand occasions featured lavish interior decoration, sumptuous banquets featuring formal toasts and speeches and dancing 'til dawn. Islanders saw these festivities as confirmation of the importance of their community and Province House was a fitting embodiment of their pride. When Charlottetown was selected as the location for the 1864 Conference on Maritime Union, it was as if Province House had been rehearsing for its role.

Province House at the time of the Conference. Illustrated London News, *November 12, 1864. (New Brunswick Museum, Webster Collection)*

Queen Square. It's a nice place now.

Arthur Newbery (Judge Alley, Henry Smith Collection, Public Archives of Prince Edward Island)

For nearly forty years Province House stood alone on Queen Square, surrounded in spring by a quagmire of red Island mud and in summer by a dusty plain. No trees, shrubs or fences ornamented the area. One sarcastic critic noted that since Province House was the only stone building of importance in Charlottetown, it would never do to obstruct the visitor's view of it by any form of landscaping. Minor improvements were begun in the mid 1860's when saplings were set out along the north side of the square, but browsing cows from the public market nearby soon disposed of these attempts at civic beautification.

To relieve the crowding of offices in Province House, a new courthouse and post office building was constructed at the western end of Queen Square. This was sold to Canada in 1873 when Prince Edward Island entered Confederation. The new province then built another courthouse at the eastern end.

With the square completed, landscaping became a public issue. The Charlottetown Arbor Society was formed to promote the beautification of the city. Hillsborough Square, King Square, Rochfort Square, and Lower Great George Street, along with Queen Square, were the main focus of attention.

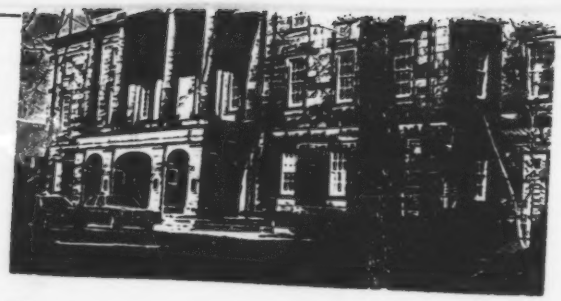
A provincial civil servant and keen amateur gardener, Arthur Newbery, was instrumental in the transformation of Queen Square. He laid out a grid pattern and on the first Arbor Day in 1884, 135 trees of eleven different varieties were planted. Further modifications, modelled on the famous Public Gardens at Halifax, followed, with a professional gardener hired. By late summer, Queen

(Metropolitan Toronto Library Board: Fine Art Collection)

Square flowerbeds were a mass of luxuriant bloom.

By the end of the 19th century the square was a major tourist attraction, with a wooden bandshell and benches, a large fountain and four small cannon from the Fortress of Louisbourg. Diagonal paths linked the three buildings, setting off Province House at the centre.

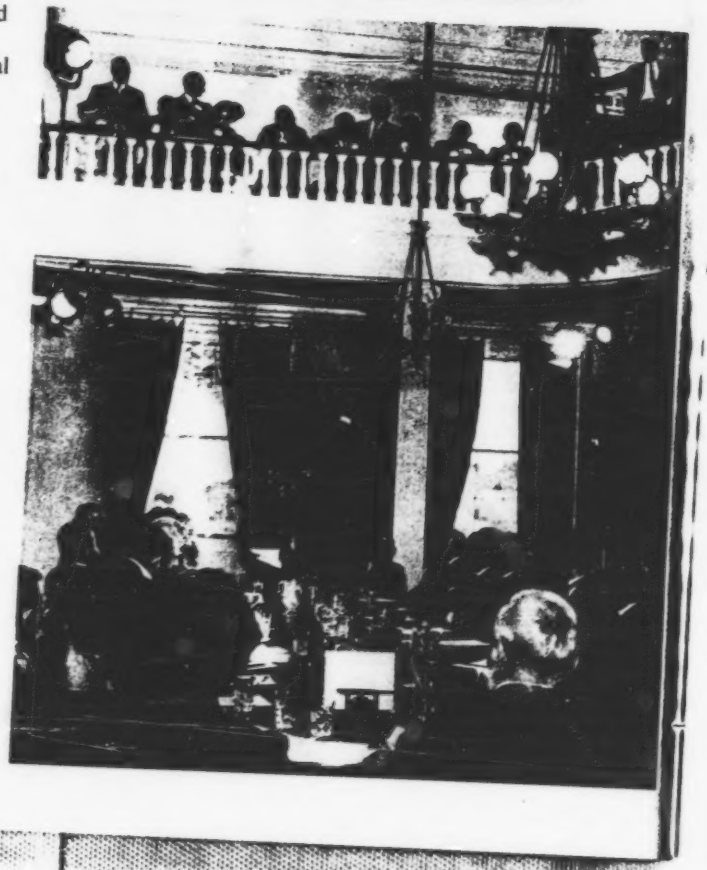
Queen Square and Province House now looked even more worthy of great events than at the time of the great conference.



Province House before restoration (Parks Canada)

As Canada's Centennial approached, many events were planned in celebration. The country re-discovered its origins, especially the meetings of 1864 in Charlottetown and Quebec. A national memorial to the Fathers of Confederation, an arts complex, was erected at the west end of the square. This massive building, surrounded by grass and concrete terraces, dramatically altered the face of the Square.

It was felt that since Province House was the real memorial, it deserved to be properly restored. Accordingly, in 1974, the federal government and the government of Prince Edward Island entered into an agreement whereby Parks Canada undertook to restore the building and refurbish certain interior areas to the 1864 period.



A re-enactment of the Charlottetown Conference, with professional actors, was held in the Confederation Chamber in 1964. In the photo, "George-Etienne Cartier" addresses the delegates. (Public Archives Canada)

Restoration. It was and is a good building.

The Confederation Chamber (legislative council chamber), the library-conference room and some of the offices of colonial administrators have been restored to their state in 1864.

Determining the original nature of the building was not always easy. Numerous and varied alterations confused or obliterated much of the original structure and appearance. Historical and archaeological research was helpful, while investigations of the building confirmed some changes and revealed others. For example, the original floor boards gave evidence of curved railings at both ends

Painstaking work by local craftsmen and restoration specialists recreated the 19th century appearance of the building. (Parks Canada)

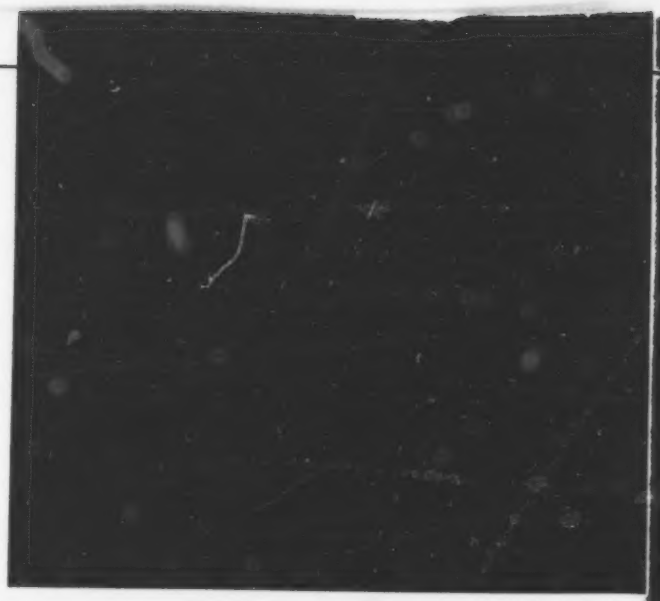
of the Confederation Chamber and of a semi-circular dais against the west wall. These features had not appeared in early photographs, although the dais was mentioned in original construction records.

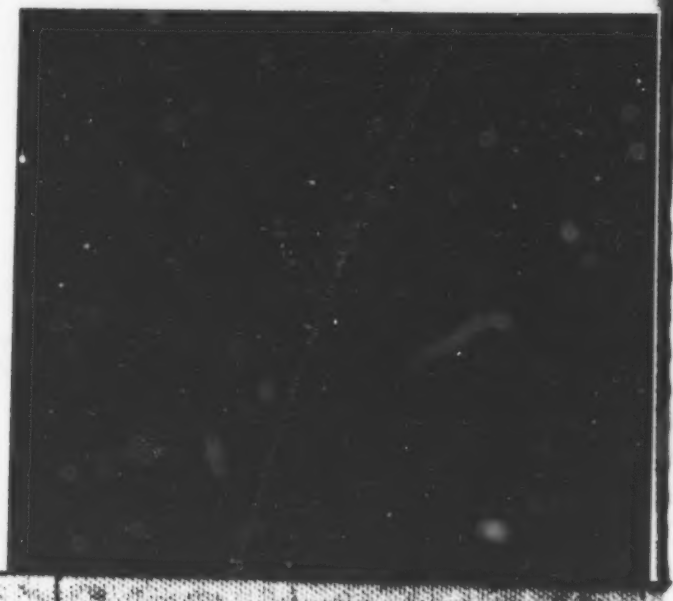
Beginning with the exterior, the sandstone was patched and cleaned and some stones replaced. A roof of slate and copper was installed according to original specifications. Chimneys and skylights were reconstructed.

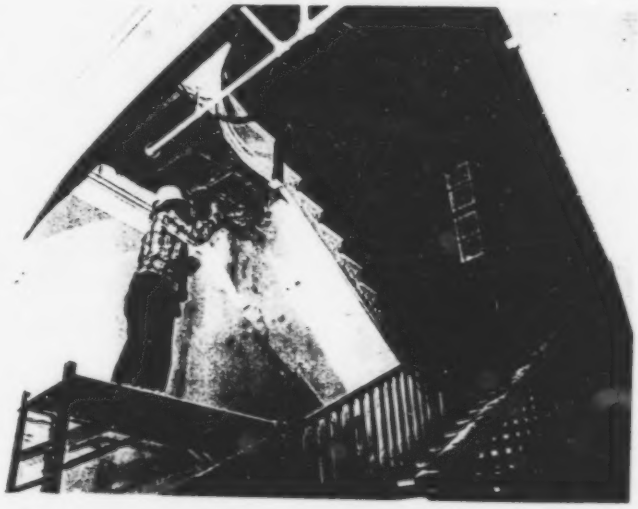
The interior had seen much painting and plastering. Careful research resulted in the accurate reproduction of original paint types and styles. Some restoration, as in the Confederation Chamber, was formal and refined, even ornate. Other areas received more simple treatment in keeping with the original.

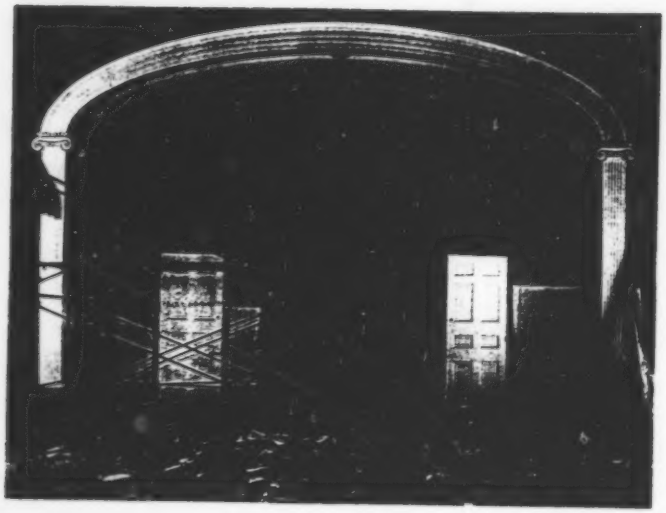
Similar attention to detail marked the refurnishing of the restored rooms. Documents of the 1840's were studied for information on the types and designs of furniture used. Furnishing specialists acquired a great array of antiques, from mahogany desks and bookcases to inkwells, blotters and pens. In some cases reproductions had to be made.

Province House, now restored and refurnished, revives the spirit of 1864 for those who visit this National Historic Site.









(Parks Canada)

Life Goes On. A monument, but not retired.

In older countries, the visitor is struck by the atmosphere and ambience created by public buildings used steadily through the centuries. In such places, history seems to come alive. This quality is in Province House, with today's provincial legislature still meeting in the assembly chamber first used in 1847. Nearby is the historic council chamber where the Fathers of Confederation achieved more than they expected or realized at the time.

Truly, the past and the present unite in Province House.

"Never was there such an important meeting as this held before in the history of British America; and it may yet be said that here, in little Prince Edward Island, was that Union formed which has produced one of the greatest nations on the face of God's earth."

Prince Edward Island's Thomas Heath Haviland concluded his speech at the banquet for the delegates to the Charlottetown conference with these prophetic words. Three years later, on July 1, 1867, the Dominion of Canada was born.

Confederation Chamber, birthplace of Canadian union. (Parks Canada — J. Steeves)

Fathers of Confederation

Canada
George Brown (Charlottetown, Quebec)
Alexander Campbell (Charlottetown, Quebec)
George-Etienne Cartier (Charlottetown, Quebec, London)
Jean-Charles Chapais (Quebec)
James Cockburn (Quebec)
Alexander T. Galt (Charlottetown, Quebec, London)
William Pierce Howland (London)
Hector-Louis Langevin (Charlottetown, Quebec, London)
John A. Macdonald (Charlottetown, Quebec, London)
William McDougall (Charlottetown, Quebec, London)
T. D'Arcy McGee (Charlottetown, Quebec)
Oliver Mowat (Quebec)
Sir Étienne-Pascal Taché (Quebec)

New Brunswick
Edward B. Chandler (Charlottetown, Quebec)
Charles Fisher (Quebec, London)
John Hamilton Gray (Charlottetown, Quebec)
John M. Johnson (Charlottetown, Quebec, London)
Peter Mitchell (Quebec, London)
William H. Steeves (Charlottetown, Quebec)
Samuel L. Tilley (Charlottetown, Quebec, London)
Robert D. Wilmot (London)

Newfoundland
Frederick B.T. Carter (Quebec)
Ambrose Shea (Quebec)

Nova Scotia
Adams G. Archibald (Charlottetown, Quebec, London)
Robert B. Dickey (Charlottetown, Quebec)
William A. Henry (Charlottetown, Quebec, London)
Jonathan McCully (Charlottetown, Quebec, London)
John W. Ritchie (London)
Charles Tupper (Charlottetown, Quebec, London)

Prince Edward Island
George Coles (Charlottetown, Quebec)
John Hamilton Gray (Charlottetown, Quebec)
Thomas H. Haviland (Quebec)
Andrew A. Macdonald (Charlottetown, Quebec)
Edward Palmer (Charlottetown, Quebec)
William H. Pope (Charlottetown, Quebec)
Edward Whelan (Quebec)